

## SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCRUTINY PANEL

Venue: TOWN HALL, MOORGATE      Date: Friday, 11 March 2005  
STREET, ROTHERHAM  
Time: 9.30 a.m.

### A G E N D A

1. Apologies.
2. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
3. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered later in the agenda as a matter of urgency.
4. Declarations of Interest.
5. Questions from members of the public and press.

#### **For Monitoring**

6. Decisions of the Cabinet Member for Social Services at Meetings held on 4th and 18th February 2005 (herewith) (Pages 1 - 11)

#### **Minutes for Information**

7. Minutes of the Meeting of the Social and Community Support Scrutiny Panel held on 11th February 2005 (herewith) (Pages 12 - 18)
8. Minutes of the Children and Young People's Board held on 3rd February 2005 (herewith) (Pages 19 - 24)
9. Minutes of Meetings of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 11th and 25th February 2005 (herewith) (Pages 25 - 37)

#### **For Discussion**

10. Domestic Violence (information herewith) (Pages 38 - 56)

- the impact of the policy
- where there are gaps in services
- what can be done practicably to address these

**Date of Next Meeting:-**

**8<sup>th</sup> April 2005**

**Membership:-**

Chairman – Councillor G. A. Russell

Vice-Chairman – Councillor Doyle

Councillors:- Ali, Binnie, Burton, Darby, Havenhand, Jack, Jackson, Walker and Wootton

**Co-opted Members**

Mrs. A. Clough (ROPES), Mr. M. Arshad (Rotherham Racial Equality Council), Mr. G. Hewitt (Rotherham Carers' Forum), Ms. J. Mullins (Disability Network), Mr. R. H. Noble and Mr. R. Parkin (Speak Up)

**CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES**  
**4th February, 2005**

Present:- Councillor Kirk (in the Chair); Councillors Gosling, Hodgkiss, G. A. Russell and P. A. Russell.

**167. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 21ST JANUARY 2005**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on the above date be agreed as a correct record.

**168. MATTER ARISING - PITT STREET PREMISES**

The Executive Director informed members that he had responded to the petitioners clarifying the Council's situation regarding the premises.

**169. EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

Consideration was given to the content of the minutes of the meeting held on the 20th December, 2004 and discussion took place on funding of the "Young Champions Award Ceremony".

Resolved:- That the Executive Director investigate the possibility of the event being sponsored and report back on the outcome of his investigations.

**170. MINUTES OF CONTRACTING FOR CARE FORUM**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the above Forum held on the 19th January, 2005 be received and the content noted, particularly the issues relating to staffing.

**171. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - NOVEMBER 2004**

Consideration was given to the content of a report of Key Performance Indicators relating to Social Services performance as at month ending November, 2004.

The Head of Strategic Services went through the situation for each of the Performance Indicators set out in the report submitted informing members of action being taken to improve under performing indicators.

Discussion took place in particular on care packages, the need for flexibility of working times and action to be taken to address this.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and the performance achieved to date be noted.

(2) That progress and future development continue to be monitored.

**172. SOCIAL SERVICES COMPLAINTS - SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY**

The Executive Director reported on the content of a report which summarised activity in relation to representations and complaints dealt with by Social Services during the first and second quarters of the municipal year, i.e. 1st April to 30th September, 2004.

The report submitted set out statistics and analysis of comments and complaints in relation to Adult Services and Children and Families Services at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the process.

Reference was also made to :-

- the complaints timescale
- Stage 3 complaints undertaken
- cases involving the Local Government Ombudsman
- training sessions for staff
- developmental issues such as the offer of advocates for young people wishing to make a complaint
- the cumulative impact of the cost of investigations

It was noted that a significant number of complaints continue to be resolved to client's satisfaction by first line managers at the first stage in the Complaints Procedure.

On issues to be addressed, members were informed that further work was to be done in respect of :-

- Best Value Study and development work on the complaints process
- The completion of investigations within timescale whilst ensuring quality of investigation
- The tracking of recommendations from outcomes
- Feedback from complainants on the outcome of handling of procedures

The Annual Report for the year would include more extensive comparative data.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the issues to be addressed noted.

**173. INCIDENTS OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE TOWARDS STAFF**

Consideration was given to the content of a report which set out details of incidents of physical violence to staff between December 2003 to September 2004.

The report included :-

- An analysis of trends/themes
- The number of reported incidents by each Service Unit
- Lessons learned
- The action taken in respect of each incident and outcome of action taken
- Ongoing improvement of the process

Evidence suggested that the pro-active nature of action taken by management at establishments is raising staff awareness about the particular behavioural conditions of some service users and succeeding in reducing recorded incidents.

It was noted that the Risk Management Officer was in discussion regarding lone worker systems and its implications corporately.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the continuing work being undertaken to address incidents of physical violence to staff be noted along with the changed systems and procedures to improve the management of this issue.

#### **174. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES STATISTICAL WORKLOAD INFORMATION**

The Head of Children and Families reported on the workload activity for the service in December, 2004.

The discernible trend was a levelling out of the number of children on the Child Protection Register and the number of Looked After Children.

The contact rates continued to climb although December was lower than previous months possibly due to the holiday period. The number of initial and core assessments completed in November were consistent or slightly higher in previous months but, as expected, dropped during the holiday period.

The outcome of the contacts made in December was set out in the report submitted.

On referrals, although only 246 out of 663 contacts went on to become referrals, they created pressures on limited resources which impacted on staff ability to undertake and complete assessments on time. As this area is a Key Performance Indicator, the need to improve was critical.

Resolved:- That the report be received.

#### **175. SOCIAL SERVICES DIRECT PAYMENTS STRATEGY**

The Direct Payments Manager reminded members that the Social and

Community Support Scrutiny Panel had undertaken a review of the Direct Payments Scheme.

The resultant report proposed a number of recommendations that needed to be undertaken in order to raise the profile and increase the take up of Direct Payments. One of the recommendations was the development of a Direct Payments Strategy. This had been undertaken and was submitted for members consideration.

Resolved:- That the content of the Direct Payments Strategy be endorsed.

**176. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs, indicated below, of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

**177. REVIEW OF RESIDENTIAL AND NON RESIDENTIAL CHARGES 2005 / 06**

Consideration was given to a report on charges for non-residential services which are reviewed annually in accordance with the budget setting process.

The report submitted set out in detail the current charges for 2004/05 and proposed charges for 2005/06 including the financial implications.

Discussion took place on the proposals with particular reference being made to the charges for Home Care and Rothercare.

Resolved:- That the revised non-residential charges as set out in the report submitted, be endorsed for submission to Cabinet with a view to them being implemented from 11th April, 2005 subject to :-

- (i) the charge for the Rothercare Service remaining unchanged
- (ii) the charge for Home Care (maximum) being increased by £5

(Exempt under Paragraph 9 of the Act – financial/business affairs proposed for services/contracts)

**178. REVIEW OF FEES TO INDEPENDENT SECTOR RESIDENTIAL AND NURSING CARE PROVIDERS 2005/06**

Consideration was given to a report on proposals to increase fees to Independent Sector Residential and Nursing Care Providers for 2005/06.

The reasons for the proposed increases were set out in the report submitted along with the increases suggested.

It was noted that consultation on the proposals had taken place with the Providers involved.

Resolved:- That the fee increases for Residential and Nursing Care homes as set out in the report submitted be approved, being effective from 11th April, 2005.

(Exempt under Paragraph 9 of the Act – financial/business affairs proposed for services/contracts)

#### **179. SOCIAL SERVICES REVENUE BUDGET 2004/05 - VIREMENT**

Consideration was given to a request to approve the virement of budgets within the Social Services Programme Area.

The request relates to changes which reflect grant carry forwards from 2003/04 in accordance with grant conditions, recent changes in structures and responsibilities and grant allocations notified since the original input of the budgets.

All the virement proposals remain within each service area and continue to contribute to meeting the Council's Core Values and priorities.

A detailed summary of the virement proposals was submitted.

Resolved:- That the request to the virement of £6,797,836 within the Social Services Programme Area revenue budget 2004/05 be supported and forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration.

(Exempt under Paragraph 8 of the Act – expenditure for goods/services)

#### **180. CHILD CARE CASE**

Members were informed of the circumstances and events relating to a child in care

The situation was noted by members who would be kept aware of developments.

(Exempt under Paragraph 6 of the Act – information relating to the care of

a child)



**CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES**  
**18th February, 2005**

Present:- Councillor Kirk (in the Chair); Councillors Gosling and P. A. Russell.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Hodgkiss.

**181. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 4TH FEBRUARY 2005**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on the above date be agreed as a correct record.

**182. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2004 / 05**

The Executive Director reported on the latest projected revenue expenditure against budget for Social Services for the financial year 2004/05.

The report submitted indicated projected expenditure against budget based on actual expenditure for the period April to the end of December, 2004.

The overall position shows a projected overspend of £395,835 (or 0.61%) for the Programme Area against a revenue budget of £65,284,271, a reduction in overspend against the previous month.

A summary of the main variations for each Service Area,, with reasons for projected underspend/overspends, was given.

The main variations were as follows:-

- Children and Families – overall overspend of £179,500 (+ 1.15%)
- Adult Services – overall overspend of £311,215 (+ 0.66%)
- Strategic Services – overall underspend of £90,510 (- 3.80%)
- Finance and Accountancy – overall underspend of £4,730 (- 3.11%)

The main budget pressures for each area were highlighted along with the various actions being taken to reduce the projected overspends. Particular reference was made to the situation in respect of RBT recharges, Learning Disabilities costs and the effect of the Wardens Service on the Domiciliary Care budget.

Resolved:- That the latest revenue budget monitoring report be received and the continuing action being taken for spending to remain within the approved budget be noted.

**183. CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Executive Director reported on the latest projected figures and commitments against the approved capital expenditure budget for

2004/05.

It was noted that an additional sum had been included since the last report for the Dalton House Extra Care housing Project and that £207,922 of the approved capital budget would be incurred in the 2005/06 financial year to meet outstanding commitments.

A brief summary of the latest position on the main projects within each client group was provided, particular reference being made to the refurbishment of Carnson House.

Resolved:- (1) That the Capital Budget Monitoring report for 2004/05 be received.

(2) That arrangements be made for Carnson House to be included on the next list of members visits to children's centres.

#### **184. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR DECEMBER 2004**

Consideration was given to the content of a report on Key Performance Indicators relating to Social Services performances as at month ending December, 2004.

The Executive Director went through the situation for each of the Performance Indicators set out in the report submitted, informing members of action being taken to improve under performing indicators.

Members were informed that the majority were doing well, progressing in the right direction.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and the performance achieved to date be noted.

(2) That progress continue to be monitored.

#### **185. CARERS PERFORMANCE**

Consideration was given to the content of a report which set out details of information relating to Carers Performance and carer assessments.

Particular reference was made to forecast figures in respect of the breaks service, and to gender and age band of carers and to their ethnicity.

The action being taken to improve performance was outlined.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the performance in each

Service area be noted.

**186. CARERS (EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES) ACT 2004 - DRAFT GUIDANCE**

Consideration was given to the content of draft policy guidance for the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 which had been produced for public consultation.

The principal aims of the Act were set out in the report submitted.

The Act will give carers more choice and opportunity to lead a more fulfilling life by ensuring that they receive information about their rights, ensure that their assessments cover leisure, training and work opportunities and will give Local Authorities new powers to enlist the help of Housing, Education and Health in supporting carers.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and the contents of the guidance be noted.

(2) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting with a suggested draft response to the consultation document.

**187. STRATEGY FOR PHYSICAL DISABILITY AND SENSORY IMPAIRMENT 2005/08**

The Group Manager, Adult Services, reported on the content of the joint three year strategy which had been developed with a wide range of partner agencies to address the needs of individuals with a physical and sensory impairment living in the Borough of Rotherham.

Extensive consultation has been undertaken in development of the strategy which was outlined, some of the priorities set out in the strategy will need additional resources to make sure they are achieved. Any bids for additional resources will be subject to the production of a robust and detailed business case which will be considered alongside partner agencies other commitments and priorities as part of the budget building process across all agencies.

The endorsement of the strategy is essential to meet targets set out in the Department of Health publication "Independence Matters" and the proposed "National Service Framework for Long Term Neurological Conditions" which is due to be implemented from April 2005. Failure to meet these targets could impact on the star rating within the Social Services Programme Area.

The Joint Strategy will continue to link into, and influence, a number of key strategic planning documents in Rotherham which were set out in the report submitted.

In the Strategy and Action Plan particular reference was made to the key

themes, how it is intended to make the strategy happen, resource and budget issues, and the way forward for the actions planned.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the Strategy for Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment 2005/08, which details strategic objectives and action plans, be endorsed.

**188. PARKHILL LODGE - FUNDING**

The Chairman referred to correspondence received relating to Parkhill Lodge and funding issues.

Resolved:- That the Executive Director give consideration to the content of the correspondence and respond as appropriate.

**189. SUCCESS OF THE DEAF FOOTBALL TEAM**

Resolved:- That the congratulations of members be conveyed to Sharon Hershman and to the deaf football team on achieving a bronze medal in Australia.

**190. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs, indicated below, of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

**191. MEMBERS' CONFERENCE EXPENSES 2004 / 05**

Consideration was given to the latest information regarding attendance of members and officers at national Social Care conferences and seminars.

It was noted that expenditure was well within the budget allocated.

Resolved:- That the information be received.

(Exempt under Paragraph 8 of the Act – contains information relating to the supply of goods and services)

**192. CHILD CARE CASE**

The Executive Director informed members of circumstances and events relating to a child in care

The situation was noted by members,

(Exempt under Paragraph 6 of the Act – information relating to the care of

a child)

**193. ADOPTION ISSUE - MINUTE AMENDMENT**

Resolved:- That Minute No. 21(g) of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Social Services held on the 9th July, 2004 be amended to omit, in Resolution No. 1, reference to Child 2001/21.

(Exempt as being confidential under Section 100(2) of the Local Government Act 1972)

**SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCRUTINY PANEL**  
**11th February, 2005**

Present:- Councillor G. A. Russell (in the Chair); Councillors Ali, Binnie, Burton, Doyle, Havenhand, Jack, Jackson and Walker.

Mrs. A. Clough (ROPES), Mr. G. Hewitt (Rotherham Carers' Forum), Ms. J. Mullins (Disability Network), Mr. R. H. Noble (Rotherham Hard of Hearing Society) and Mr. R. Parkin (Speak Up)

Also in attendance was Councillor Kirk, Cabinet Member for Social Services.

**103. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Darby and Wootton.

**104. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Ms. J. Mullins declared a personal interest in Item No. 109 below being involved with services relating to Older People and Carers.

**105. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

There were no members of the public and press present.

**106. CORPORATE PLAN 2005 TO 2010**

The Policy and Research Manager, Dawn Roberts, reported on progress made to date towards developing a new Corporate Plan for the Authority. The first draft of the Plan was presented along with details of further work needed to complete it,

Particular reference was made to :-

- the need to align the Plan with the Community Strategy having regard to the long term vision of the Council and its partners
- how the Plan was developed, its aims and priorities, objectives and targets
- proposals for the consultation process
- member input to the Plan
- involvement of staff, public and partners

Subsequent queries/comments made were in respect of :-

- (a) the priorities for scrutiny such as equal opportunities issues and areas

which needed to be improved;

(b) the need to deal with issues more corporately having regard to cross cutting themes. Better communication would be required;

(c) the planning for population trends such as the growth in the numbers of older people and impact on health inequalities;

(d) plans for better access in the Town Centre for people with a disability.

It was noted that the second draft of the Plan was being prepared which would include :-

- rationalising objectives
- highlighting partnership issues
- capturing early milestones, focussing on early deliverable issues
- simplifying and clarifying statistical information

Resolved:- (1) That progress on the Corporate Plan be welcomed and the areas to be included in the second draft be noted.

(2) That the format and direction of the Corporate Plan be endorsed along with the proposals for the consultation process.

(3) That the suggested minor changes in wording of the vision be endorsed.

(4) That the second draft of the Corporate Plan, when completed, be submitted to this Scrutiny Panel.

## **107. EXTRA CARE HOUSING**

The Supporting People Manager submitted a report which summarised progress on the development of two extra care housing schemes and of the extra care housing strategy.

The present situation in respect of the schemes at the site of Dalton House and at the Queensacre site, Swinton, were reported along with the funding details for each scheme and the risks/uncertainties relating to them.

The report submitted also set out how the development of each scheme assists the Council in meeting strategic objectives.

Particular comment was made in respect of delays to the scheme for the Dalton House site and the possible adverse effect on Council commitment.

Resolved:- (1) That the contents of the report submitted be noted along

with the progress being made with the Extra Care Housing Strategy 2003-08.

(2) That a further report on progress at the two Extra Care Housing sites be submitted to a future meeting of this Scrutiny Panel.

#### **108. DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN ROTHERHAM**

The Executive Director, Social Services, reported that a strategy for older people is required for Rotherham, which maps the known needs of local older citizens, incorporates further needs assessment/research and sets out an action plan to meet local needs and aspirations of current and future older citizens for improved quality of life.

It also recommends that a Task Group be established to oversee the development of the Strategy involving all Council Programme Areas, the Council's Older Persons Member Champion (Councillor Hodgkiss), PCT, voluntary sector, Rotherham Partnership and all other stakeholders.

The Strategy will be developed in a national and local policy context, which has seen older people issues come to the fore, as reflected in the recent Improving the Quality of Life of Older Peoples Shared Priority agreed between the Government and the LGA. Reflecting a national trend, Rotherham's older population is also forecast to grow significantly over the next 20 years from about 20% of the population to about 30%.

The report submitted set out the proposals in detail, the policy context for older people, social care issues to address the needs of older people, current service provision within Social Services and the key themes and questions to be addressed.

The content of the strategy was outlined along with the way in which the work involved would be taken forward.

Particular discussion took place on consultation issues and on addressing matters relating to fuel poverty.

The Chair referred to the scrutiny review undertaken into 'Improving Services to Older People and Carers' and whether this would be taken into consideration as work on the strategy progressed.

Resolved:- (1) That this Scrutiny Panel :-

(a) notes the key statistics, research findings and policy imperatives concerning older people;

(b) agrees that a strategy is produced for older people by Summer 2005, led by Rotherham MBC with the Primary Care Trust and Voluntary sector;

(c) agrees that three RMBC Member Champions, including the Council's



Older Persons Member Champion, are closely involved in the development of the proposed Strategy;

(d) agrees that a paper on this approach is submitted to Cabinet and then placed before the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Boards for their agreement.

(2) That Councillor Hodgkiss be invited to a future meeting of this Scrutiny Panel to speak on his role as the Council's Older Persons Member Champion.

(3) That a progress report be submitted to a future meeting of this Scrutiny Panel on the development of the Strategy for Older People in Rotherham.

**109. 'IMPROVING SERVICES TO OLDER PEOPLE AND CARERS IN ROTHERHAM' - REVIEW UPDATE**

Consideration was given to the content of the Action Plan based on recommendations from Social and Community Support Scrutiny Panel review into 'Improving Services for Older People and Carers in Rotherham'.

The Action Plan set out the required action and progress to date on issues, intended outcomes and how the outcome has helped service users.

An update on each of the issues was reported.

Subsequent comments related to :-

- the One Stop Shop situation
- the completion dates of action being taken and meeting targets for them

Members expressed concerns that whilst the Executive Director stated that improvements had been made in services to older people and carers, the progress made in implementing the recommendations arising from the review was not clearly reflected in this report. No was it clear in the report why deadlines had not been met.

Resolved:- (1) That the information be received and the progress on issues be noted.

(2) That an update be provided to the Panel in six months time, with

progress against targets arising from the review recommendation clearly explained.

#### **110. SOCIAL SERVICES DIRECT PAYMENTS STRATEGY**

The Direct Payments Manager reminded members that the Social and Community Support Scrutiny Panel had undertaken a review of the Direct Payments Schemes.

The review had proposed a number of recommendations that needed to be undertaken in order to raise the profile and increase the take up of Direct Payments. One of the recommendations was the development of a Direct Payments Strategy. This had been undertaken and was submitted for members consideration.

An Action Plan for the other recommendations had been prepared and all were being progressed.

Resolved:- (1) That the content of the Direct Payments Strategy be endorsed and welcomed.

(2) That an update be provided to the Panel in six months time.

#### **111. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES - QUARTERLY SUMMARY**

Consideration was given to the content of a report which summarised activity in relation to representations and complaints dealt with by Social Services during the first and second quarters of the municipal year, i.e. 1st April to 30th September, 2004.

The report submitted set out statistics and analysis of comments and complaints in relation to Adult Services and Children and Families Services at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the process.

Reference was also made to :-

- the complaints timescale which would be tighter when the new procedures were in place
- Stage 3 complaints undertaken
- cases involving the Local Government Ombudsman
- training sessions for staff
- developmental issues such as the offer of advocates for young people wishing to make a complaint
- the cumulative impact of the cost of investigations
- the outcome of complaints and that lessons learned would form part of training plans for managers

It was noted that a significant number of complaints continue to be resolved to client's satisfaction by first line managers at the first stage in the Complaints Procedure

Subsequent comments related to the action taken if a complaint is upheld, identifying any themes/similarity of complaints and developing a strategy to deal with such in future, and that Rotherham MBC compared favourably with other local authorities in relation to the number of complaints dealt with.

Resolved:- That the report be received.

**112. DECISIONS OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AT MEETINGS HELD ON 7TH AND 21ST JANUARY 2005**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meetings on decisions made by the Cabinet Member for Social Services, held on the above dates be received and the content noted.

**113. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

The Service Manager, Performance Information and Quality, reported that national consultations were being held with regard to the proposed revision of complaints procedures for Social Services.

The report submitted set out details of the proposed changes to the complaints process, which were expanded upon.

The outcome of the consultation on the proposals would result in new regulations guidance, with Rotherham MBC's current Social Services complaints procedures needing to be revised for both Adult Services and for Children and Families Services.

The meeting was informed that the implementation date had been delayed until October 2005 and that the CSCI had been made aware of this Authority's view that there appeared to be a lack of member involvement in the complaints process.

Resolved:- (1) That the content of the proposals for the revision of complaints procedures for Social Services be noted and that the responses to the consultations be endorsed.

(2) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting of this Scrutiny Panel on the final guidance and regulations and implementation requirements for Rotherham MBC.

**114. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT PANEL HELD ON 14TH JANUARY 2005**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the above meeting be received and agreed.

**115. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE HELD ON 14TH AND 28TH JANUARY 2005**

Resolved:- That the minutes of meetings of the above Committee held on the dates indicated be received.

**1 THE ROTHERHAM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S BOARD - 03/02/05****THE ROTHERHAM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S BOARD  
THURSDAY, 3RD FEBRUARY, 2005**

Present:- Councillor Stone (in the Chair); Councillors Boyes, Ellis, Gosling, Kirk, Littleboy, Angela Bingham (Voluntary Sector), Imogen Clout (Voluntary Sector), Ann Lawrence (Non-Exec RPCT), J. McIvor (PCT), Ellen Smith (Rotherham General Hospitals), Joyce Thacker (Connexions) and Dave Featherstone (District Commander, South Yorkshire Police).

**Also in attendance:-**

Mike Cuff (Chief Executive), Di Billups (Executive Director, Children and Young People's Development), John Gomersall (Executive Director (Social Services), Peter Rennie, Ged McNulty and Simon Hughes (Simon Hughes Associates).

**1. FIVE A DAY**

The Chairman referred to the achievement of providing "Five a Day" in every Rotherham school as part of the healthy eating initiative.

Rotherham is the first area in the whole of the Yorkshire and Humber region where every eligible school has signed up for the school fruit and vegetable scheme. Every school day nearly 11,500 Rotherham pupils at 91 schools now enjoy a free healthy snack.

Members of the Board welcomed this as an important part of supporting children in every school. Particular reference was made to the involvement of various organisations and partners to achieve this service.

Agreed: That everyone concerned be congratulated on this achievement.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies were received from Kath Henderson, Philip Marshall and Sarah Whittle.

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS BOARD - 2ND DECEMBER, 2004**

The minutes of the Board held on 2nd December, 2004 were agreed as a correct record.

**4. MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE GROUP HELD ON 16TH DECEMBER, 2004 AND 20TH JANUARY, 2005**

The minutes of the Executive Group and key issues were noted.

## 5. CHILDREN ACT 2004

Di outlined the matters set out in the report circulated which summarised that

The Children Bill was given Royal Assent on Monday 15 November 2004. This follows the publication of the Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' in 2003 which proposed changes in policy and legislation in England to maximise opportunities and minimise risk for all children and young people, focussing services more effectively around the needs of the child, young people and families. The consultation on the Green Paper showed broad support for the proposals, in particular the intention to concentrate on outcomes that children and young people themselves have said are important, rather than prescribing organisational change. This is very much aligned to the views expressed by Rotherham.

The Act has been produced in the light of this consultation and gives effect to the legislative proposals set out in the Green Paper to create clear accountability for children and young people's services , to enable better joined up working and to secure a better focus on safeguarding children.

Agreed: (1) That Members note the requirements of the Act

(2) That officers produce papers detailing the individual guidance provided by the DfES around the role of the Lead Member, Director of Children's Services and Voluntary Sector etc, and that these are consulted upon.

(3) That the Development Team continue to move forward as agreed, in bringing in the integration of children's services in line with the requirements of the Act.

(4) That members receive regular progress reports regarding planned developments.

## 6. ROLE OF MEMBER & SENIOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Di outlined the matters set out in the report circulated which detailed that across central and local government and all agencies that work with children, there is a shared commitment to ensure that every child has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Achieving this vision will require national and local government to move to a position where:

- The well being of children and young people is at the heart of all policies and all agencies are working together toward shared outcomes.

## 3 THE ROTHERHAM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S BOARD - 03/02/05

- Clear overall responsibility and accountability exist for services.
- Key services are integrated around the needs of the children and young people, and mechanisms are put in place to involve them in determining how their needs are met.

To ensure clear accountability locally, the Children Act 2004 requires every Children's Service Authority (CSA) in England to appoint a Director and lead member for Children's Services (DCS). The DCS and the Lead Member respectively will provide a professional and political focus for children's services. They have three key roles:

- **Responsibility and accountability** for local authority children's services;
- **Leadership** to drive change;
- **Forging partnerships** to bring together relevant local partners.

The DCS and Lead Member are accountable for the Children's Services Authority functions in four main areas:

- education services** – the authority's functions in its capacity as a local education authority (excluding certain LEA functions for adults)
- social services** – the authority's social services function in so far as they relate to children and the local authority's functions for children and young people leaving care;
- health services** – functions exercised by the authority on behalf of an NHS body, in so far as they relate to children;
- inter – agency co-operation** – the new functions in the Children Act to build and lead arrangements for inter agency co-operation.

Agreed: (1) That the well being of children and young people is a priority and placed at the heart of the Community and Corporate Plan and policies related to this agenda.

- (2) That strategic planning is in place to ensure that all agencies are working together toward shared outcomes.
- (3) That consideration is given to new structures which reflect the requirements of the Act on the appointment of the Senior Executive

Director for Children and Young People's Services.

- (4) That consideration is given to the appointment of an elected member with responsibility for Children and Young People's Services, to coincide with the appointment of the Senior Executive Director Children and Young People's Services.

**7. APPOINTMENT - UPDATE.**

Mike reported that Sonia Sharp, currently Deputy Director of Education at Leeds, would take up the post of Senior Executive Director, Children and Young People's Services Development, at the end of April, 2005.

Mike referred to the interview process, which had included a wide range of organisations and partners and young people.

Agreed:- (1) That the position be noted.

- (2) That everyone involved in the appointments process be thanked for their efforts.

**8. SAFEGUARDING BOARD DEVELOPMENT - PROGRESS.**

Mike reported that he had chaired the meeting of the Safeguarding Board yesterday and was pleased to report that good progress was being made with a variety of issues.

He reported that Zafar Saleem would be a member of the Safeguarding Board to advise on equalities and equal opportunities issues.

Agreed: That the good progress be welcomed.

**9. CONSULTATION ON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK.**

Di reported on the consultation document received and the need to respond by 24th February, 2005. It was proposed that the draft response be finalised by the Executive Group and emailed to Board Members for final comment.

Agreed:- That the above process be approved.

**10. CHILDREN'S INCLUSION & SUPPORT SERVICE AND ROTHERHAM CHILDREN'S FUND LOCAL EVALUATION**

Ged McNulty reported on the CISS Project and summarised that, following the difficulties encountered during the development stage, by the Children's Inclusion & Support Service (CISS), one of the Children's Fund projects supported by 25% Youth Crime Prevention allocation, it was felt necessary to give a brief history of the CISS and to update the Executive Group and Children's Board on the progress made by the CISS since October 2004.



**5 THE ROTHERHAM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S BOARD - 03/02/05**

Ged was pleased to report that the Project was now based at Montgomery Hall, Wath upon Dearne and that the new Steering Committee were making good progress with the initiative, service delivery and monitoring.

In addition, Simon Hughes reported on the Children's Fund Local Evaluation Progress Report and also about plans for the development of a robust system for monitoring quality, effectiveness and value for money of Children's Fund supported services. It is planned that throughout the year the Group and Board can be informed about how Children's Fund projects are delivering quality services and how they can provide evidence of this quality. The purpose of this process will be to ensure that future commissioners of services will have the evidence and knowledge to be able to make informed choices about which services they wish to purchase.

Simon reported that he acted as a "Critical Friend" and provided advice on systems, monitoring and evaluation of Children's Fund projects, in three stages, as follows:-

1. Development of partnership/organisation.
2. Planning and design of services.
3. Review delivery of services on the basis of prevention, partnership and participation.

Simon proposed that further work be undertaken on inputs, outcomes and indicators and that case study reviews be reported to the Executive and to the Board on a regular basis.

Agreed: (1) That the good progress now being made with CISS be welcomed.

(2) That the Executive Group and Board receive progress reports and case study reviews on the Children's Fund Projects on a regular basis.

**11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2005 at 10.00 am.

**12. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs, indicated below, of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

**13. SEXUAL EXPLOITATION TASK & FINISH GROUP - PROGRESS.**

Di gave an update and reported that a meeting of the Sexual Exploitation Task and Finish Group would be held shortly.

**PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**  
**11th February, 2005**

Present:- Councillor Stonebridge (in the Chair); Councillors Clarke, Doyle, Hall, License, G. A. Russell, Sangster and Whelbourn.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R. S. Russell and St.John.

**98.           DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

**99.           BEST VALUE REVIEW OF COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES**

Helen Best, Project Manager Review of Community Based Services, presented the submitted report on the progress of the Best Value Review of Community Based Services. The review had recently reached its mid-point in terms of allocated time and the report outlined the progress made in meeting the review's targets.

The assessment of service areas was on target and the consultation with staff and stakeholder agencies was ahead of target. The public consultation although behind target was now underway and likely to be completed fully by the end of March, 2005. The inputting of data via SNAP had been delayed due to circumstances beyond the control of those working within the Social Services Department and highlighted were issues relating to inter-agency communication and response times.

The research was focussing on gathering both quantitative and qualitative data about service development and delivery, outcomes for service users and carers and on staff networking.

The report set out :-

- Background to the review
- Best Value Review Group
- Assessment of Service Areas
- Comparison with other Authorities
- Consultation with Service Users, Potential Service Users and Carers
- Finance

Also submitted was an addition to the Action Plan covering activity beyond February, 2005 in draft form for discussion with the Best Value Review Group and Best Value Review Team.

A question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered :-

- inspection timescales
- need to link in to relevant scrutiny reviews already carried out

- criteria for selecting which Councils to visit
- remit and scope of the review
- input from Neighbourhood Management
- strategic procurement strategy
- impact in terms of Gershon savings
- Commission for Social Care/Inspection

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted, particularly that the consultations was providing both qualitative and quantitative data and that the response to the questionnaires had so far been encouraging.

(2) That there was a need to link in to relevant scrutiny review work carried out.

(3) That the remit of the review group and scope of the review be clarified.

(4) That consideration be given to linking in the work to the National Service Framework and Strategy for Older People.

(5) That the final draft of the project's report and its recommendations be presented to this Committee.

**100. CONNEXIONS : EMERGING ISSUES**

Rod Norton , Young People's Service Manager, explained the background to the Connexions service and the reasons for the organisational changes.

Negotiations had commenced in November, 2004 and it was proposed that Rotherham be the host body for Connexions South Yorkshire. The four local authority solicitors had met regarding the Connexions deed and a report was expected shortly for Corporate Management Team which would subsequently be submitted to Members and the Cabinet.

The deed would include the issue of a Rotherham Scrutiny Panel for the Connexions Service in South Yorkshire. The Rotherham Scrutiny Panel could provide information to other scrutiny panels on request.

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered :-

- which scrutiny panel should be responsible for Connexions South Yorkshire
- need for a tax avoidance disclosure
- remit of Connexions
- background to Rotherham being proposed as the host organisation

- resource implications
- composition of the Advisory Board
- elected Member representation on the Advisory Board

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted.

(2) That the principle of Rothe rham leading on scrutiny of Connexions South Yorkshire be agreed.

(3) That Rod Norton and Cath Saltis liaise and incorporate the Committee's views in the report for Corporate Management Team,

(4) That Rod Norton liaise with the Heads of Legal and Democratic Services and Corporate Finance to clarify the position regarding the issue of a disclosure of tax avoidance.

(5) That further reports be submitted as appropriate.

#### **101. PROTOCOLS FOR CROSS CUTTING REVIEWS**

Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny, referred to checklists for reviews and that, in practice, cross cutting reviews were being carried out. However, there was no formal protocol for such working.

It was felt that any protocol needed to be simple and not prescriptive, giving scrutiny panels the flexibility to initiate a review and communicate at the scoping stage.

Resolved:- That Cath Saltis strengthen the current checklist into the form of a protocol.

#### **102. JOINT SCRUTINY SOUTH YORKSHIRE**

The Chairman raised the question of how to tackle South Yorkshire wide issues making reference to such issues as blue light services, health and transport.

It was proposed to build some cross cutting work into the programme for next year.

Resolved:- That the Chairman liaise with the Chairs of the other local authority scrutiny committees with a view to taking this initiative forward.

#### **103. ANNUAL SCRUTINY PLAN : PROGRESS**

Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny, indicated that scrutiny overall was excellent regarding reviews and outputs and that scrutiny advisers would be working with Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Panels to pull information

together.

Two areas requiring further work were with regard to (a) the policy review programme and (b) scrutiny and area assembly/community involvement working.

The profile of scrutiny had been raised nationally but not so much locally.

Reference was made to the forthcoming request to carry out a review of area assemblies and that such review should be carried out by the Democratic and Resources Scrutiny Panel.

Reference was also made to the need to think about what scrutiny would look like when cabinet portfolios were finalised.

Resolved:- (1) That a Special Meeting take place in April, 2005, to consider the position after portfolios had been finalised.

(2) That, in the meantime, the Chairman pull together models of good practice.

**104. MINUTES**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th January, 2005 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

**105. WORK IN PROGRESS**

Members of the Committee reported on the following issues :-

(a) Councillor License reported budget considerations.

(b) Councillor Doyle reported consideration of progress on past reviews and the domestic violence agenda.

(c) Councillor Hall reported ongoing review work regarding Wardens/Caretakers/Rangers and a special meeting next Tuesday regarding the Waste Management Strategy.

(d) Councillor Sangster reported :-

Regeneration Scrutiny Panel

- budget considerations
- consideration of implications of Civil Contingency Act
- consideration of the regeneration of housing estates

- receipt of a letter of thanks from Vaughan Williamson, South Yorkshire Police, regarding the Off Road Motorcycle Nuisance Initiative

#### Health Scrutiny

- the Health Services Working group were to have a joint scrutiny level meeting

(e) Councillor Stonebridge reported :

- the first part of the review of the LSP was coming to an end. The second part would look at the working of spokes and the work of the voluntary sector
- the use of consultants by the Authority and the possible need for a future cross cutting review

(f) Cath Saltis reported that the Centre for Public Scrutiny had invited Rotherham to participate in a case study regarding how Rotherham engages members of the community in scrutiny reviews and scrutiny work.

#### **106. CALL-IN**

There were no formal call in requests.

(The Chairman authorised consideration of the following items to prevent any unnecessary delay in processing the matters referred to)

#### **107. FREQUENCY OF FUTURE SCRUTINY PANEL MEETINGS**

Resolved:- That each scrutiny panel consider its own requirements regarding the frequency of future scrutiny panel meetings and report back to this Committee.

#### **108. BUDGET PROCESS**

The Committee considered future scrutiny involvement in the budget process.

Resolved:- That scrutiny no longer participates in the budget process in the future but scrutinises the outcomes of the budget linked to performance.

**PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**  
**25th February, 2005**

Present:- Councillor Stonebridge (in the Chair); Councillors Clarke, Hall, License, G. A. Russell, R. S. Russell, St.John and Sangster.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Doyle and Hussain.

**109.       DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

**110.       CHILDREN ACT 2004**

The Executive Director, Children and Young People's Services Development, presented the submitted report relating to the above.

The Executive Director outlined the background and matters set out in the report which summarised that The Children Bill was given Royal Assent on Monday, 15th November, 2004. This followed the publication of the Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' in 2003 which proposed changes in policy and legislation in England to maximise opportunities and minimise risk for all children and young people, focusing services more effectively around the needs of the child, young people and families.

The consultation on the Green Paper showed broad support for the proposals, in particular the intention to concentrate on outcomes that children and young people themselves have said are important rather than prescribing organisational change. This was very much aligned to the views expressed by Rotherham.

The Act had been produced in the light of this consultation and gave effect to the legislative proposals set out in the Green Paper to create clear accountability for children and young people's services, to enable better joined up working and to secure a better focus on safeguarding children.

Discussion ensued and the following issues were covered :

- Safeguarding Board
- Annual Self Assessment
- In depth rigorous inspection sometime between March, 2006 and March, 2007

Resolved:- (1) That the requirements of the Act be noted.

(2) That the proposal, that officers produce papers detailing the individual guidance provided by the DfES around the role of the Lead Member, the Director of Children's Services and the Voluntary Sector etc and that these are consulted upon, be supported.



(3) That the proposal, that the Development Team continues to move forward as agreed in bringing in the integration of children's services in line with the requirements of the Act, be supported.

(4) That this Committee receives regular progress reports regarding planned developments.

**111. DRAFT STRATEGY GUIDANCE ON THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR AND LEAD MEMBER OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

The Executive Director, Children and Young People's Services Development, presented the submitted report relating to the above matter.

The Executive Director outlined the matters set out in the report submitted which detailed that, across the central and local government and all agencies that work with children, there is a shared commitment to ensure that every child has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Achieving this vision would require national and local government to move to a position where :

- The wellbeing of children and young people is at the heart of all policies and all agencies are working together toward shared outcomes
- Clear overall responsibility and accountability exist for services
- Key services are integrated around the needs of the children and young people, and mechanisms are put in place to involve them in determining how their needs are met.

To ensure clear accountability locally, the Children Act 2004 requires every Children's Service Authority (CSA) in England to appoint a Director and lead member for Children's Services (DCS). The DCS and the Lead Member respectively will provide a professional and political focus for children's services. They have three key roles :

- **Responsibility and accountability** for local authority children's services
- **Leadership** to drive change
- **Forging partnerships** to bring together relevant local partners

The DCS and Lead Member are accountable for the Children's Services Authority functions in four main areas :

- a. **education services** – the Authority's functions in its capacity as a local education authority (excluding certain LEA functions for adults)
- b. **social services** – the Authority's social services function insofar as

they relate to children and the local authority's functions for children and young people leaving care

- c. **health services** – functions exercised by the Authority on behalf of an NHS body, insofar as they relate to children
- d. **inter-agency co-ordination** – the new functions in the Children Act to build and lead arrangements for inter agency co-operation

Discussion ensued and the following issues were covered :-

- hand over period to the new Senior Executive Director
- responsibility and accountability
- Inspection regimes
- support services
- commissioning arrangements
- value for money elements and performance indicators
- multi-service centres

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted.

(2) That this Committee supports the following proposals :-

(a) That the wellbeing of children and young people is a priority and placed at the heart of the Community and Corporate Plan and policies related to this agenda

(b) That strategic planning is in place to ensure that all agencies are working together toward shared outcomes.

(c) That consideration is given to new structures which reflect the requirements of the Act following the commencement of the Senior Executive Director for Children and Young People's Services.

(d) That consideration is given to the appointment of an elected member with responsibility for Children and Young People's Services, to coincide with the appointment of the Senior Executive Director Children and Young People's Services.

(3) That Di Billups be thanked for all her work on integrating Children and Young People's Services and she be wished all the very best for the future.

## **112. DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN ROTHERHAM**

Colin Bulger, Head of Policy and Partnerships, presented the submitted report which argued that a strategy for older people was required in Rotherham which mapped the known needs of local older citizens, incorporated further needs assessment/research and set out an action

plan to meet local needs and aspirations of current and future older citizens for improved quality of life.

It was proposed that a task group be established to oversee the development of the Strategy involving all Council programme areas, the Council's Older Persons and Health Member Champion, Primary Care Trust, voluntary sector, Rotherham Partnership and all other stakeholders.

The Strategy would be developed in a national and local policy context, which had seen older people issues come to the fore as reflected in the recent Improving the Quality of Life of Older People's Shared Priority agreed between the Government and the Local Government Association. Reflecting a national trend, Rotherham's older population was also forecast to grow significantly over the next twenty years from about 20% of the population to 30%.

Reference was made to the Government's initiative Better Government for Older People which identified the following six priorities :-

- Employment
- Regeneration/Neighbourhood renewal
- Lifelong Learning
- Health and Social Care
- Race and age diversity
- To follow the World Assembly on Ageing Action Plan (the first international agreement that specifically recognised the potential of older people)

Such a policy move was also reflected at the local level.

The report set out the proposals and details covering :-

- Policy context for Older People
- Social Care
- Current service provision within Social Services
- CPA 2005
- Content of the Strategy
- Taking the work forward

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered :-

- National Service Framework
- Composition of Task Group
- Reporting of the Task Group
- Involvement of Older People's Champions
- Capturing Learning

Resolved:- (1) That the key statistics, research findings and policy imperatives concerning older people be noted.

(2) That this Committee welcomes that a Strategy is being produced for older people by Summer 2005 led by Rotherham MBC with the Primary Care Trust, Voluntary Sector and other key partners such as Housing and feels that the Strategy should be built on the National Service Framework for Older People already undertaken.

(3) That it be noted that a copy of the report was to be placed before the Rotherham Primary Care Trust, Rotherham Partnership Board and the Local Strategic Partnership for their agreement.

(4) That the Task Group should utilise existing knowledge and experience in the form of Older People's champions.

(5) That a report be submitted on the initial meeting of the Task Group.

(6) That further reports be received as the Strategy develops.

### **113. POLICY REVIEW - PART 2**

Colin Bulger, Head of Policy and Partnerships, presented the submitted report outlining the outcome of a major review of key strategic policies and strategies that were core to the Council's business and critical in ensuring effective corporate governance.

This followed an initial review (completed in August, 2004) of the key policies/strategies that drive the rest of the Council's Corporate Policy Framework, particularly the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan. This second stage of the review provided an assessment of the key service specific and cross cutting strategies that were key to the Council's delivery.

The assessment covered two issues :

- Alignment with Community Strategy and Corporate Plan
- Whether the strategies and policies were "fit for purpose" assessed against a range of quality standards and criteria

A further stage was now underway with a full review of key strategies in line with the new Vision for the Borough.

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered :

- the need for a glossary of terms used in the documentation
- hallmarking policy and policy development
- use of web sites and other facilities to make the policy

- more accessible and user friendly
- timescales

Resolved:- (1) That the content of the assessment now submitted be noted.

(2) That it be noted that some strategies/policies/plans were not currently aligned with the existing Community Strategy and Corporate Plan.

(3) That it be noted that the third stage of the Review would be critical in ensuring that the Council's policies and strategies were in line with the new Vision for the Borough.

(4) That the outcomes of the Policy Review 3 be reported to this Committee in due course.

(5) That it be noted that work was underway to develop a policy toolkit that would assist in the process of strengthening and improving the Council's strategies and policies and that this be presented to this Committee along with the outcome of Policy Review 3.

(6) That policy hallmarking be built into policy development and the toolkit.

(7) That Lee Adams attend the next meeting of this Committee and present the timescales.

(8) That a presentation on the accessibility of the policy framework be made to members of the public.

(9) That an overview of strategies be prepared.

(10) That further consideration be given to the role of scrutiny in policy review.

**114. POST OF STRATEGIC LEADER, RBT - RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

Consideration was given to nominating two scrutiny representatives on to the appointment panel for the above post.

Resolved:- That Councillors Sangster and Stonebridge be nominated to serve on the appointment panel.

**115. SCRUTINY FORWARD PLANNING**

Resolved:- That arrangements be made for a half day session in April to consider the above.

**116. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS 1ST FEBRUARY TO 31ST MAY, 2005**

The Committee noted the above.

**117. MINUTES**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th February, 2005 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

**118. WORK IN PROGRESS**

Members of the Committee reported on the following issues :-

(a) Councillor St. John reported that the Key Stage 3 SATS review was now complete and would be submitted to Corporate Management Team and subsequently this Committee.

(b) Councillor G. A. Russell reported :

- Corporate Parenting review was ongoing
- the next Panel Meeting was focusing on domestic violence. The voluntary sector providers had been invited to attend. A researcher from the Centre for Public Scrutiny would also be attending the meeting using the domestic violence review as a case study
- the Learning Disability Review Group was being reconvened

(c) Councillor Hall reported :

- ongoing review work regarding Wardens/Caretakers/Rangers
- the next Panel meeting on 10th March, 2005 was to be a themed meeting considering food standards

(d) Councillor Stonebridge reported :

- attendance at a seminar in London regarding ? . . . . .
- that, along with Cath Saltis, he had met Colin Cupus to discuss the external review of scrutiny
- a further meeting next week of the LSP Group

(e) Cath Saltis reported a positive response from the other local authorities regarding joint working.

**119. CALL-IN**

There were no formal call in requests.

(The Chairman authorised consideration of the following item to keep Members informed)

**120. LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL**

Councillor St. John indicated a request from the scrutiny panel to consider a report prior to it being determined by the Cabinet Member had not been acceded to. He sought clarification of the position.

Reference was made to the availability of the call-in procedure if Members were not happy with a decision. The Chairman reminded Members that Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny Panels could attend Cabinet Member meetings. The Chairman informed the Committee of a pre-decision call in system operating in some authorities.

Some concerns were however expressed regarding scrutiny becoming involved in issues before they were determined by the Executive in that such involvement could prejudice effective scrutiny after the decision was made.

Resolved:- That the information be noted.

# **Final report of the Scrutiny Members' Domestic Violence Working Group**

**CLRs Ann Russell (Chair),  
Ann Britton,  
Irene Furnell,  
Hilda Jack,  
Lyndsay Johnston,  
Amy Rushforth,  
(former CLR) Maggie Clark**

with  
**Peter Blanksby**  
(Furniture Plus)  
**Sandra McNeill**  
(Rotherham Domestic Violence  
Forum Co-ordinator)  
**Natalie Yarrow**  
(Disability Network)

Summer 2002



## **Executive Summary**

Domestic violence is an extremely serious issue that blights the lives of thousands, most of whom are women, and their families. As a Council we devote considerable services and resources to tackling its effects. In November 2000, a Members' seminar received a presentation from members of the Rotherham Domestic Violence Forum. From this meeting it was suggested that a working group be established with Members from each of the Scrutiny Panels. The working group was set up in March 2001 and agreed to look at the impact of domestic violence in Rotherham and identify ways in which the Council could address the issue.

The aim of the review was as follows:

- **To formulate a proposed corporate domestic violence policy and strategy and to consider what measures should be put in place to effectively implement these.**
- **To examine funding issues relating to domestic violence projects in Rotherham**

In doing this we wanted to identify and document:

- Existing services in Rotherham and where there are gaps in funding provision;
- Examples of good practice from other local authorities and relevant agencies in the region in relation to project funding (including reference to the recent 'Review into Funding of Voluntary and Community Groups'); and
- Working with Officers' Domestic Violence Working Group, examples of good practice in relation to the development and implementation of a Council domestic violence policy.

### **Who was involved?**

Each Scrutiny Panel nominated at least one Member to participate. In addition, in order to broaden the working group's base, we co-opted members from appropriate community organisations to sit on the group and contribute to the discussions.

Representatives were co-opted from:

- Rotherham Domestic Violence Forum;
- Furniture Plus; and
- Rotherham Disability Network

As part of the review Members invited representatives from the following agencies: Community Safety Unit, South Yorkshire Police, Apna Haq, Choices and Options and Rotherham Women's Refuge. Additional contributions were received from the Chief Executive and officers from different Programme Areas.

The Review Group also considered relevant legislative and policy initiatives; namely

- Rotherham Strategy to Reduce Crime and Disorder (1999 – 2002);
- 2001 Crime and Disorder Audit; and
- "Living without fear" an integrated approach to tackling violence against women.

## Summary of findings

- a) We wanted to oversee the development of a Domestic Violence Policy and respond constructively to the concerns raised about funding. In meeting these aims, we wanted to send out a clear message that domestic violence is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- b) It is clear that despite the worrying statistics, levels of domestic violence in Rotherham are no better or worse than comparable areas. We received evidence that demonstrated that there has been a long commitment by some organisations in the Borough to tackle domestic violence effectively. However, historically this has lacked co-ordination
- c) It is clear that a great deal of good work is taking place in Programme Areas and officers should be commended for this. However, there is still a task ahead to ensure that frontline staff are aware of the policy and have appropriate training to make sure they are able to do their jobs effectively.
- d) We heard from the representatives from the domestic violence service providers that funding uncertainties place great pressure on their organisation and we sought assurances that systems would be in place to improve this. We welcome the moves to more robust and longer term budgetary planning. Equally, we hope that the priorities of the Safer Rotherham Partnership are reflected in appropriate resourcing of services from our partners.
- e) The working group recognised that the network of domestic violence services providers in Rotherham deliver essential support to women and children experiencing domestic violence. We had concerns however, that they are unable to meet the demands placed upon them because of lack of staffing and other essential resources.
- f) We are concerned that the lack of bi-lingual staff or integrated and co-ordinated translation services for people (and especially women) who do not have English as a first language, has meant on occasion that family members or other members of their communities are used to translate. This could have implications for safety. There are also long term planning issues with the increase in numbers of asylum seekers, some of whom will inevitably experience domestic violence.
- g) Because the review was time limited, we were unable to give full consideration to the issue of how disabled people experiencing domestic violence access services and would suggest that further deliberation be given to this in the future.
- h) During the course of the review, we came across some very positive examples of multi agency working. We welcome the work that has taken place to improve the access of women leaving the refuge to community care grants. We hope that this example can be built on.

## Recommendations

What has become apparent through this review is the ongoing need for 'joined-up working' and we commend the partnership work that is being undertaken to make our communities safe. It is with this in mind that we make the following recommendations to the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee to take to the Council and the SRP.

- I. The Corporate Management Team is urged to address the issue of sustainable funding for the domestic violence co-ordinator's post and for the Women's Refuge as a part of the budget process.
- II. That CMT should explore whether Service Level Agreements (or initiatives such as Supporting People) between the Council (or partner organisations) and service providers will provide a more secure basis for future funding.
- III. That the monitoring of progress of the 'Review into Funding of Voluntary and Community Groups' takes account of the specific concerns raised in this report.
- IV. The Domestic Violence Policy is fully implemented across all Programme Areas and its progress monitored through the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel.
- V. Work is undertaken to develop a staff welfare policy for employees experiencing domestic violence, drawing upon good practice from other Local Authorities.
- VI. Consideration is given to developing appropriate interpretation and translations services across all Programme Areas. This could include facilities such as 'Language Line'. Similarly, the use of appropriate communication services for deaf/hearing impaired people (for examples minicomms, and 'typetalk') should be explored.
- VII. Work should continue to take place in consultation with relevant groups, to ensure that services are accessible and appropriate to the needs of disabled women and Black and Ethnic Minority women.
- VIII. That Social Services consider whether the designation of 'Children in Need' in the family support strategy can be extended and if appropriate, Choices and Options and/ or other agencies make referrals to the relevant agencies as part of their preventative work.
- IX. That the payroll-giving scheme is endorsed and implemented at the earliest opportunity.
- X. That Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee, with its power of health scrutiny, gives consideration to examining how domestic violence is addressed by health service providers.
- XI. The Council as a key player in the SRP, should continue to encourage the development and review of domestic violence policies and procedures across the other agencies.

**Cllr GA Russell**  
**Chair of Members' Domestic Violence Working Group**

## **Original Concerns – why Members wanted to look at this issue**

- 1.1 Domestic violence is an extremely serious issue that blights the lives of thousands, most of whom are women, and their families. As a Council we devote considerable services and resources to tackling its effects. In November 2000, a Members' seminar received a presentation from members of the Rotherham Domestic Violence Forum. The presentation aimed to outline the extent and nature of domestic violence and also what services were in place to address the issue in the Borough.
- 1.2 A number of concerns were raised at the meeting. It was recognised that it is difficult to address the issue of domestic violence because the crime often takes place behind closed doors and frequently there are no adult witnesses. We wanted to know how our services responded to victims and what role we could play in raising awareness and changing attitudes as part of a long-term strategy to reduce the incidents of domestic violence. Members looked at the cost of domestic violence to the economy of Rotherham as a whole and we were keen to explore what commitment and practical support the Council could give, especially in light of our responsibilities under Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- 1.3 From this meeting it was suggested that a working group be established with Members from each of the Scrutiny Panels. The working group was set up in March 2001 and agreed to look at the impact of domestic violence in Rotherham and identify ways in which the Council could address the issue.

## **2 Terms of Reference**

The working group discussed the concerns raised at the Members' seminar and at an Area Assembly meeting and from that determined what our terms of reference would be. We started to meet at the same time as an Officers' working group and we were keen that the work of the groups complemented each other. We decided to focus on two major areas. The first is the development of a Domestic Violence Policy for the Authority and the second around funding issues for domestic violence projects.

- To formulate a proposed corporate domestic violence policy and strategy and to consider what measures should be put in place to effectively implement these.
- To examine funding issues relating to domestic violence projects in Rotherham

### **2.1 Scope**

To identify and document:

- Existing services in Rotherham and where there are gaps in funding provision;
- Examples of good practice from other local authorities and relevant agencies in the region in relation to project funding (including reference to the recent 'Review into Funding of Voluntary and Community Groups'); and
- Working with Officers' Domestic Violence Working Group, examples of good practice in relation to the development and implementation of a Council domestic violence policy.

Members had great concerns about the effects of domestic violence on children. Unfortunately, as the review was time limited we were unable to look at what work

was being undertaken in schools, particularly around protection and prevention. We hope that this important issue will be taken up by scrutiny in the future.

### 3 Who was involved?

- 3.1 Each Scrutiny Panel nominated at least one Member to participate. In addition, in order to broaden the working group's base, we co-opted members from appropriate community organisations to sit on the group and contribute to the discussions.

Representatives were co-opted from:

- Rotherham Domestic Violence Forum;
- Furniture Plus; and
- Rotherham Disability Network

- 3.2 As part of the review Members invited representatives from the following agencies: Community Safety Unit, South Yorkshire Police, Apna Haq, Choices and Options and Rotherham Women's Refuge. Additional contributions were received from the Chief Executive and officers from different Programme Areas.

The Review Group also considered relevant legislative and policy initiatives; namely

- Rotherham Strategy to Reduce Crime and Disorder (1999 – 2002);
- 2001 Crime and Disorder Audit; and
- "Living without fear" an integrated approach to tackling violence against women

- 3.3 The **Crime and Disorder Act 1998** places a statutory duty on local authorities and the police to develop local partnerships to reduce crime and disorder. These partnerships will bring together all the relevant agencies, including those dealing with domestic violence and its survivors. A main duty of the partnerships will be to conduct an audit of local crime and disorder problems, including the nature and profile of domestic violence.

- 3.4 The document "**Living Without Fear - an integrated approach to tackling violence against women**" (available on the Women's Unit Website) was published in June 1999. This document sets out the Government strategy framework in relation to violence against women and offers examples of good practice from around the country.

The Government strategy sets three specific goals<sup>1</sup>

- To provide timely support and protection to victims;
- To bring perpetrators of violence to justice; and
- To prevent violence happening in the first place

### 4. What do we mean by domestic violence?

- 4.1 Although we all agreed that domestic violence is a crime, it is not a specific statutory offence. The term is used to describe a range of criminal offences - and sometimes sub-criminal behaviour - occurring in particular circumstances, usually in the home.

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<sup>1</sup> *Living Without Fear - an integrated approach to tackling violence against women* Home Office 1999

Consequently, there are many different definitions of domestic violence used by many different organisations. We decided to use a Home Office definition, as did the Officer working group and the Crime and Disorder Audit, because we thought it was important to identify a **common** definition or understanding, so that we were all clear about what we mean by domestic violence.

4.2 The definition is as follows:

“Domestic Violence includes all kinds of physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse within all kinds of intimate or family type relationships. Abuse can include harassment which can be actual, threatened or attempted. The most common abuse is carried out by men against female partners, but abuse can also occur by women against men, within same sex relationships as well as by in-laws and within the extended family.

People experience domestic violence regardless of their social group, class, age, race, disability, sexuality, lifestyle, religion or culture. The abuse can begin at any time, in new relationships or after many years spent together.

Domestic Violence can take many forms such as physical assault, sexual abuse, rape and threats. In addition destructive criticism, pressure tactics, disrespect, breaking trust, isolation and harassment. “

(adapted from Domestic Violence Break the Chain – Home Office 1999<sup>2</sup>)

## 5 Counting the cost

### 5.1 National context

“Domestic violence is rarely a one-off event. One violent incident tends to lead to another, and such incidents often increase in frequency and severity over time, sometimes only ending when someone is killed.”

**The Rt. Hon Paul Boateng MP<sup>3</sup>**

5.2 We wanted to get a picture of what is happening nationally and locally, however, we recognised that it is difficult to obtain truly accurate statistics. There are a number of reasons for this. Many agencies and the Police say that there is a massive under-reporting of incidents with the 2000 British Crime Survey estimating that less than one in three (31.3%) victims of domestic violence actually reported the incident to the police<sup>4</sup>. There are also inconsistencies in the way that agencies record incidents. Some agencies (such as social services, for example) may not record incidents as domestic violence if the initial referral is for some other reason (such as mental health). Undoubtedly, this will be repeated across the range of public services.

5.3 The following statistics are intended to give a flavour of the extent and nature of the problem.

- more than 1 in 10 women experience domestic violence each year<sup>5</sup>
- 2 women per week are murdered by their partner or ex-partner<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Home Office Leaflet, “*Breaking the Chain*”, 1999

<sup>3</sup> Home Office ‘*Multi Agency Guidance for Addressing Domestic Violence*’, 1999

<sup>4</sup> 2000 British Crime Survey, Home Office

<sup>5</sup> Women’s Unit & Home Office - “*Living without fear*” 1999

<sup>6</sup> Homicide Figures 1998 as quoted in above

- domestic violence costs Hackney Social Services and Housing Departments in excess of £2.6 million per year<sup>7</sup>
- Domestic violence accounts for a quarter of all recorded violent crime<sup>8</sup>. In a recent survey by police forces, over 80% of all calls for help were attacks on women by male perpetrators. Approximately 8% were attacks on men by female perpetrators<sup>9</sup>

5.4 We were shocked at what we found; domestic violence is extremely common yet its effects remain largely hidden from view. As Council Members we were also alarmed by the potential costs to Local Authorities. We looked at the research 'The Day to Count' and received figures from the 'Counting the Cost'<sup>10</sup>. Both highlighted that the effects of domestic violence place a huge burden on services – not just in terms of obvious service provision such as housing and homeless services, but also in terms of schools, child protection, the number of children looked-after, mental health services, adult protection etc. We have a duty to consider these financial costs as well as trying to lessen the devastating impact of domestic violence on the lives of our citizens.

#### 5.5 **Local context**<sup>11</sup>

The following statistics give an indication of the scale of the problem. The first demonstrates that domestic violence is a major element in *recorded* violent crime in the Borough. The second example shows that significant Council resources are dedicated to providing services as a *result* of domestic violence. The third shows the response from service providers from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

- In Rotherham there were 2023 incidents of domestic violence reported to South Yorkshire Police Domestic Violence Officer during the period April 2000 – March 2001. 10.9% of these were repeat incidents.
- Rotherham MBC Housing and Environmental Services' records for the period April 2000 to March 2001 showed that 23.3% of all the homeless applications they accepted were due to domestic violence.
- In an audit of services in Rotherham carried out by the Domestic Violence Co-ordinator in August – December 2000, 73% of respondents gave information on how domestic violence impacted on their service users including:-
  - family breakdown
  - homelessness
  - mental and physical health problems
  - psychological and emotional harm
  - financial hardship
  - impact on children and young people's development
  - substance misuse and self harm
  - isolation from family, friends and support networks

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<sup>7</sup> Stanko, E., Crisp, D., Hale, C. and Lucraft, L (1998) *Counting the Costs: estimating the impact of domestic violence in the London Borough of Hackney*. Bristol Crime Concern - a report into the selected costs of domestic violence on public services, including health police etc indicated that in excess of £5 million was spent in Hackney in 1996. The costs to housing and social services constituted over half of this.

<sup>8</sup> Kershaw, G., Budd, T., Kinshott, G., Mattinson, J., Mayhew, P., & Myhill, A. (2000); *The British Crime Survey 2000*, Home Office Statistical Bulletin 18/00

<sup>9</sup> Stanko, E., Crisp, D., 'Day to Count' 2000

<sup>10</sup> *Counting the Costs* as above

<sup>11</sup> taken from *An Audit of Crime and Disorder – 2001* Rotherham Community Safety Partnership

- impact on employees in terms of stress, sickness and absence

## **6 How does the Local Authority respond to domestic violence?**

- 6.1 We were aware from the feedback from the Officer working group that many of our programme areas provide considerable support and services to people experiencing domestic violence. Anecdotally, we heard that it was overwhelmingly women who experienced violence from men they knew and in a significant proportion of cases, these women had children. We were aware that the violence was rarely a one-off incident, and often women experience frequent and severe attacks over some length of time before seeking help from agencies. We also received evidence that showed that men can also experience abuse within their relationships, but research suggests they are less likely to report being hurt, frightened or upset by what has happened. They are also less likely to be subjected to a repeated pattern of abuse<sup>12</sup>.
- 6.2 There are two main ways in which the Council provides support to people experiencing domestic violence. The first is through direct service provision in housing, social services, youth and community work etc. The second is through supporting specific projects with funding applications or through grants.
- 6.3 The working group asked for an overview of Council services. All Programme Areas were contacted for information in mid 2001. We have highlighted some of the areas covered but it is worth stating that this is by no means an exhaustive list:

### **Social services**

- Compulsory child protection training for all social workers. This training includes a component on domestic violence.
- Adult protection procedures for vulnerable or elderly people
- Developing strategies to support mental well-being for women experiencing domestic violence

### **Young People's Services**

- Addressing domestic violence as part of the youth work curriculum
- Providing specialist support services to Asian families (Apna Haq)
- Providing centres and workers with training and information on domestic violence services and issues. Qualifying workers also have specific sessions to raise awareness of domestic violence.

### **Education**

- Education Welfare Officers offer support to families where children and young people are having difficulties at schools
- Information has been provided to schools highlighting issues for children who are affected by domestic violence

### **Housing and Environmental Services**

- Specific provision for people made homeless due to domestic violence

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<sup>12</sup> Mirrlees-Black, Catriona (1999) *Domestic Violence: findings from a new British Crime Survey self-completion questionnaire* Home Office Research Study 191 Home Office



- Formal monitoring of domestic violence referrals

### **Social Inclusion**

- Community Development Team has a named link worker with 'Choices and Options'

### **Human Resources**

- Have developed an employee helpline in partnership with 'Westfield'. Advice is given on a range of issues including domestic violence.

6.4 It is worth noting that Housing and Environmental Services and Social Services both make a significant financial contribution to the Refuge's running costs. In addition, these programme areas, alongside Education, Culture and Leisure, also contribute towards the cost of the Rotherham Domestic Violence Forum Co-ordinator's post.

## **7 What other services are available in the Borough?**

7.1 Whilst acknowledging that the Local Authority provides extensive services, it is worth noting that we are not the sole deliverer of services. The Community Safety Officer gave an overview of the range of both general and specialist services in the Borough. These include:

- Women's Refuge
- Apna Haq
- Choices and Options
- NSPCC Domestic Violence Family Support Project
- South Yorkshire Police
- Youth Start
- Victim Support

7.2 We also received a presentation from a Domestic Violence Officer from South Yorkshire Police. She outlined how South Yorkshire Police respond to incidents of domestic violence. There are currently two officers within the Rotherham area that deal specifically with domestic violence incidents, although at the time of the review, one had been absent for some time. The Police Officer briefly highlighted joint initiatives to improve security in the home that have taken place with Housing Associations and Housing and Environmental Services. We asked her about how incidents were monitored and recorded and it was highlighted that limited resources had been given to this function. However, it was hoped that with the introduction of new technology it would be easier to monitor details.

The Police Officer gave some details of the training that police receive to enable them to deal with incidents sensitively and appropriately. Whilst improvements had been made to the way incidents are dealt with, there were concerns expressed that some cases of domestic violence were not being recorded as such. Officers were attending scenes and crimes were being recorded as assault or public order offences for example. This means that the true extent of domestic violence may be under-recorded.

7.3 During the course of talking to the various witnesses, we posed the question were services improving? We were heartened that most reported positive developments, however, there were uncertainties about what progress was being made by health service providers (although the Domestic Violence Forum Co-ordinator reported that awareness training was being delivered to midwives). We were unable to explore this further but we consider that this warrants future attention. We were also only able to get a snapshot of work undertaken by the police. Because of time constraints, we were unable to highlight in any depth how they address domestic violence and make comparisons with some of the good practice undertaken by other forces in the Region (for instance West Yorkshire Police).

## **8 Why develop a Domestic Violence Policy?**

8.1 Notwithstanding the excellent work that is taking place in many of the programme areas, we had very real concerns that there was a lack of co-ordination across the Council. What became clear during this exercise was, with the exception of Housing and Environmental Services and to a lesser extent Social Services, that there was a lack of written protocols and procedures across the Council and that further work needed to be done to develop formal monitoring systems.

8.2 We were also aware that the 'Strategy to Reduce Crime and Disorder (1999-2002)' had as a priority a commitment to ensure that key agencies develop written policies and procedures. Clearly, this target had slipped, as many of the key agencies, including the Council had not yet completed this task.

8.3 With this in mind, we asked the Officers' domestic violence working group to begin formulating a corporate policy. We were aware that a number of Local Authorities around the country had developed their own policies and we asked Officers to incorporate relevant good practice from these policies. Following concerns raised at our surgeries about the risk of information being shared inappropriately, we were particularly anxious that the policy should be accompanied with guidelines on confidentiality. We were pleased that comprehensive guidance notes were produced that highlighted what safeguards should be put in place. Throughout the process we received regular updates from officers and we value their input and hard work in developing the policy.

8.4 The full policy has been subject to wide consultation. Officers circulated the draft to the Domestic Violence Forum for their comments. Additionally, each of the Programme Areas had the opportunity to contribute to the policy and guidelines. The policy is to be presented to Cabinet and Council in the summer of 2002.

8.5 The Policy provides guidance on what we can do as a Council and how services can be improved. However, we recognise that whilst we can do much to improve service delivery *in-house*, the success of the Domestic Violence Policy is also dependant on external provision, much of which is delivered by voluntary sector partners. As Members, we believe the Domestic Violence Policy offers a real opportunity to deliver co-ordinated and effective services to one of the most vulnerable groups in the Borough and we are hopeful that the policy can provide a helpful model for other services across Rotherham. Because we recognise that domestic violence occurs across all sections of our communities some of our employees may have experienced or be affected by domestic violence. With this in mind, we acknowledge the duty of care that we have towards our employees and

commend the work that is taking place to develop a welfare policy for staff. We look forward to its completion and implementation.

- 8.6 During the course of the review a number of additional issues were raised. Concerns were raised by the Women's Refuge that highlighted that some of the women and children leaving the Refuge to take up permanent tenancies granted by the Council are incurring rent arrears.

In some case, although women have signed up to the tenancy, they are unable to move into a council property immediately as they need a Community Care Grant (CCG) to purchase essential household items such as beds, bedding, fridge, cooker etc. CCGs cannot be applied for until the address of the new tenancy is known and claims at that time were taking up to 4 weeks to be assessed.

We heard that women were staying in the Refuge until they were able to purchase essential items and because of this, were liable for rent on both the Refuge and their new tenancy. The Housing Benefit Department were unable to pay for benefit on 2 homes due to Government regulations. This leaves the woman with up to 4 weeks rent arrears before she has actually moved into the property. The Refuge had concerns that women were returning to violent partners rather than moving into unfurnished properties or incurring rent arrears.

- 8.7 We received evidence from Housing and Environmental Services and benefits workers from Corporate Finance. It became clear that we were unable to intervene in the payments of benefits as these were strictly regulated. However, we looked at whether greater co-ordination between the various agencies could improve this situation and we asked the Officer working group to set up a meeting between the relevant parties to look at whether a more 'flexible' approach could be taken. We are extremely pleased that following this work, it was agreed to allow a rent-free period for women leaving the Refuge to take up a Council property. There were also positive developments in prioritising claims for Community Care Grants and housing benefits that should be noted. In addition, 'Furniture Plus' (a voluntary sector group providing low-cost furnishing and household goods) agreed to look at their delivery system and whether improvements could be made to this. As Members, we consider that these developments can make a significant impact on the lives of vulnerable women and we thank our Cabinet colleagues, Officers and other partners for their assistance.

## **9 What are the funding issues?**

- 9.1 During the consultation on the Domestic Violence Policy, many groups expressed concerns about whether the policy would generate an increased demand for services that could not be met with existing resources. These echoed the discussions of the initial presentations to the Members' seminar and Area Assembly, that acknowledged that voluntary sector organisations were unable to deal with all the referred cases because they were already working to full capacity. The various service providers highlighted the need for better and longer-term funding for those organisations providing help and support for victims of domestic violence.
- 9.2 Understandably, the service providers were reluctant to raise expectations about a range of services that may not be able to be met. Whilst we are keen to make sure that the Domestic Violence Policy is effective, as Members, we recognised that this

cannot be done without the contributions from our partners in the voluntary sector who are providing front-line services. We wanted to find out what the particular concerns about funding and their capacity to deliver services were. We invited representatives from the Women's Refuge, Choices and Options and Apna Haq to speak to the Review Group. It is worth noting that all three groups have different funding sources. The Refuge receives grants from the Local Authority and other revenue is generated through rents. Choices and Options is funded through the Safer Rotherham Partnership and Apna Haq is located in the Young People's Service and also generates funds through external bids.

### 9.3 **Women's Refuge**

- Rotherham Refuge accommodated up to 4 women and 6 children at any one time
- referrals are made mostly through agencies - self referrals were not encouraged
- each client's needs are assessed and plans developed accordingly
- 3 members of staff employed, two Development Workers and a Manager, whose role is to provide support, and co-ordinate volunteers' recruitment and training
- if the Refuge is full then women can be referred to a refuge in other parts of the country through the Women's Aid Federation.

9.3.1 The Manager outlined that the Refuge cannot meet current demand and had been full since November 2001. Over 120 women and 180 children had been referred to the Refuge for places over the past 12 months but only 26 women and 26 children have been able to be accommodated. The remainder had been referred to alternative provision in the surrounding area or in some circumstances in other parts of the country. It was cited that some women were reluctant to leave their families and may return to dangerous situations rather than moving from the area.

9.3.2 The Manager stated that current funding can only support basic running costs and they struggle to cover the costs of essential existing services on the grants received. They said that although the Refuge was very small, it would be difficult to expand services because salary costs etc cannot be covered. Whilst they had attracted external funding, this was only available for 'new' projects rather than core services. There was a general discussion about the difficulties in planning services when projects are given little notice about grants. This means that services are not always sustainable in the long-term and it may create difficulty in recruiting and retaining paid staff.

### 9.4 **Choices and Options**

9.4.1 Choices and Options provides confidential support and advocacy for women experiencing domestic violence in Rotherham. The service is independently funded through the Safer Rotherham Partnership. Since April 2001, the agency had worked with 55 women and 112 children. Referrals come from a variety of sources including the Homeless Section. The Manager did raise concerns about lack of referrals from Social Services, although this may be due to a lack of awareness about what Choices and Options did. We hope that the Domestic Violence Policy will address this and appropriate referrals will be made using the guidance outlined in the policy.

9.4.2 Although the funding stream was different for Choices and Options, there were shared concerns about resources and being unable to meet service demands. The Manager gave an example of this, stating that at present there was no dedicated children's worker, although a significant proportion of women referrals had children

who had witnessed or had been affected by domestic violence first hand. She cited evidence that indicates there is a high incident of neglect and abuse in families experiencing domestic violence. She identified a potential change to the way children are designated to be “in need” as one way of addressing this. As with the Refuge, Choices and Options reported significant concerns about sustainable funding.

## 9.5 **Apna Haq**

9.5.1 Apna Haq was established at the same time as Choices and Options. Both projects were funded through South Yorkshire Police’s Community Initiative Programme and were located in the Young People’s Service although Choices and Options has since gained independent status. The project has evolved from being solely a provider of support advice services to Asian women & children facing domestic violence issues to also developing training & development initiatives for this client group. The Young Peoples Service provide the office accommodation, phone and direct line management, and contribute towards staffing although this is minimal i.e. 3 ½ hours per week project worker time. The project is reliant totally on external funding for the rest of its major staffing and resource costs. The project work with Asian women has been cited by the Home Office as an example of good practise.

9.5.2 The workers gave an outline of the service they provide and raised some of the issues that Asian women were facing in particular. We heard that it was often difficult for any women to access support or advice but for Black or Asian women this could be more difficult because of language/ cultural barriers. It was highlighted that there was a lack of bilingual interpreters employed by the Council and other essential services. Not only does this mean that vulnerable people are not accessing services but has led on occasions, to family members being used inappropriately to interpret.

On a related note, the working group also raised that communication support was also needed for some disabled people, particularly deaf people and individuals with speech impairments, and the absence of this support, may prevent them from accessing appropriate services.

9.5.3 It is hoped that the Apna Haq will become independent in the long-term and it has set up a steering group to begin work on this. The project has been successful in attracting external funding, however, this activity takes up a substantial amount of the Co-ordinator’s time. A number of bids for funding have been made through SRB6, Objective 1 and HAZ. As with other projects, Apna Haq reported that there was a gap between funding streams, and gave examples of financial support for part of the project ending before the next funding commences.

9.6 We were aware that the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel had commissioned a ‘Review into Funding of Voluntary and Community Groups’. Rather than duplicating their efforts, we thought it would be helpful to look at their findings to inform this part of our review. Members supported the following recommendations of the ‘Funding Review’ in respect of domestic violence projects:

- Acknowledge the need for further work to be carried out to assess the contribution of funding activity towards the achievement of the Council’s aims.
- Ask the Executive to consider the development of a corporate approach to grant funding which addresses the identified inconsistencies.

- Recommend that the External Funding Manager (when appointed) identify sustainable alternative external sources of funding.

Additionally, Members of the working group identified the need for the process to be transparent with clear notice of grants being given to organisations to assist them to plan services.

9.7 We invited the Chief Executive, Ged Fitzgerald to seek clarification about the funding situation in his role as Head of Paid Service and Chair of the Safer Rotherham Partnership. In particular, we wanted information on these issues:

- The difficulties of planning long-term domestic violence services because of the lack of notice given by the council about whether voluntary sector organisations will receive grants;
- Given the Crime and Disorder Audit has suggested a priority of 'securing long-term funding to ensure sustainability of front-line services', what is being done by the council (as part of the Crime and Disorder partnership) to address this?

9.8 He explained that it was an aim of the Council to move towards a three year budget strategy that would mean that the Council would be able to plan its priorities longer term, and additional pressures could be looked at annually. In parallel with this, action had been taken to improve funding to voluntary groups on a multi year basis, which may address some of the issues identified as part of this review. In addition, service level agreements were being explored between the Council and service providers. He outlined that discussions about developing a compact were underway between the Council and other partners and gave assurances that things would improve in the future.

9.9 We were aware that the formal review of the Crime and Disorder audit and setting of priorities for the Safer Rotherham Partnership had yet to be completed. We were told that the Council had a long-term aim to integrate community safety into service planning and there were positive examples of this currently in Programme Areas (for instance, 'Risky Business' in Education, and the provision of furnished emergency accommodation for homeless people). While this is a positive development, we were concerned that there should be a commitment towards mainstreaming funding across all the partners.

9.10 We were keen to explore whether we could assist in a practical way with fundraising with the Refuge (the only local domestic violence organisation with charitable status). We asked officers to explore whether it would be feasible to set-up a 'payroll giving scheme'. At present discussions are underway with the Corporate Management Team to move this forward. We are hopeful however, that council employees will be able practically to demonstrate their support for addressing an important social concern and Council priority through payroll donations.

## **10 What are our conclusions?**

a) The working group set itself some clear tasks. We were keen to find out about the extent and nature of the problem and we received verbal and written evidence from a variety of sources to give us better picture. We wanted to oversee the development of a Domestic Violence Policy that could deliver tangible service improvements. We also wanted to respond constructively to the concerns raised by the service providers about levels of funding. In meeting these aims, we wanted to

send out a clear message that domestic violence is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

- b) In achieving our aims, we first looked at what was happening in the Borough. It is clear that despite the worrying statistics, levels of domestic violence in Rotherham are no better or worse than comparable areas. That is not to say that we can be complacent. Clearly, there are hundreds, possibly thousands, of people (mostly women) who will be experiencing domestic violence in Rotherham. We received evidence that demonstrated that there has been a long commitment by some organisations in the Borough to tackle domestic violence effectively. However, we think it is fair to say that historically this has lacked co-ordination and therefore, the services have often been provided on a somewhat piecemeal basis. The Safer Rotherham Partnership now gives us the opportunity to organise activities and develop policies and procedures with the Council and our partners.
- c) It is clear that a great deal of good work is taking place in Programme Areas and officers should be commended for this. We are hopeful that the Domestic Violence Policy will give opportunities for greater co-ordination at a strategic level and we are pleased that the Officer's group has made some headway in this area. However, there is still a task ahead to ensure that frontline staff are aware of the policy and have appropriate training to make sure they are able to do their jobs effectively.
- d) We heard from the representatives from the domestic violence service providers that funding uncertainties place great pressure on their organisation and we sought assurances that systems would be in place to improve this. It is difficult to plan services without sustainable funding and clearly, the year-on-year budget rounds are not helpful, either to the groups or the Programme Area. We welcome the moves to more robust and longer term budgetary planning. Equally, we hope that the priorities of the Safer Rotherham Partnership are reflected in appropriate resourcing of services from our partners.
- e) The working group recognised that the network of domestic violence services providers in Rotherham deliver essential support to women and children experiencing domestic violence. Without their input, it is likely that more people would face considerable hardship. We had concerns however, that they are unable to meet the demands placed upon them because of lack of staffing and other essential resources. The Refuge has only 4 beds at present and many more women seek assistance than can be accommodated in Rotherham. Similarly, the outreach services provided by Apna Haq and Choices and Options are struggling to meet the demands placed upon them.
- f) The presentation by service providers also brought to our attention issues around appropriate translation and interpretation services. We are concerned that the lack of bi-lingual staff or integrated and co-ordinated translation services for people (and especially women) who do not have English as a first language, has meant on occasion that family members or other members of their communities are used to translate. This could have implications for safety. There are also long term planning issues with the increase in numbers of asylum seekers, some of whom will inevitably experience domestic violence.
- g) On a related theme, we also had concerns whether disabled people, particularly if they were deaf or hearing impaired, could access services in the Borough. Because the review was time limited, we were unable to give full consideration to

the issue of how disabled people experiencing domestic violence accessed services and would suggest that further deliberation is given to this in the future.

- h) During the course of the review, we came across some very positive examples of multi agency working. We welcome the work that has taken place to improve the access of women leaving the refuge to community care grants. Whilst there is clearly much work to be done, we consider that this is a practical demonstration of agencies to working together and making a difference. We hope that this example can be built on.

## **11 Recommendations**

The Review Group recognises that the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) is key to developing co-ordinated strategies to address some of the issues highlighted in our report. Others are clearly within the remit of the Council and its Programme Areas. What has become apparent through this review is the ongoing need for 'joined-up working' and we commend the partnership work that is being undertaken to make our communities safe. It is with this in mind that we make the following recommendations to the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee to take to the Council and the SRP.

- I. The Corporate Management Team is urged to address the issue of sustainable funding for the domestic violence co-ordinator's post and for the Women's Refuge as a part of the budget process. The process should be transparent with clear notice of grants being given to organisations to assist them to plan services.**
- II. That CMT should explore whether Service Level Agreements (or initiatives such as Supporting People) between the Council (or partner organisations) and service providers will provide a more secure basis for future funding.**
- III. That the monitoring of progress of the 'Review into Funding of Voluntary and Community Groups' takes account of the specific concerns raised in this report and appropriate assistance should be given to domestic violence service providers to identify sustainable alternative external sources of funding.**
- IV. The Domestic Violence Policy is fully implemented across all Programme Areas and its progress monitored through the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel.**
- V. Work is undertaken to develop a staff welfare policy for employees experiencing domestic violence, drawing upon good practice from other Local Authorities.**
- VI. Consideration is given to developing appropriate interpretation and translations services across all Programme Areas. This could include facilities such as 'Language Line'. Similarly, the use of appropriate communication services for deaf/hearing impaired people (for examples minicoms, and 'typetalk') should be explored.**
- VII. Work should continue to take place in consultation with relevant groups, to ensure that services are accessible and appropriate to the needs of disabled women and Black and Ethnic Minority women. This should be co-ordinated through the SRP, Officer Working Group and Domestic Violence Forum. Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel should monitor this progress.**



- VIII. That Social Services consider whether the designation of 'Children in Need' in the family support strategy can be extended and if appropriate, Choices and Options and/ or other agencies make referrals to the relevant agencies as part of their preventative work.**
- IX. That the payroll-giving scheme is endorsed and implemented at the earliest opportunity.**
- X. That Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee, with its power of health scrutiny, gives consideration to examining how domestic violence is addressed by health service providers.**
- XI. The Council as a key player in the SRP, should continue to encourage the development and review of domestic violence policies and procedures across the other agencies. Progress on this, and whether the priorities of the SRP in respect of domestic violence are being met, should be reported through the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel.**

**Cllr GA Russell  
Chair of Members Domestic Violence Working Group**

## 12 Thanks

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